

Says Oil Spill Disproves Safety Claims

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Rep. Vern Buchanan (FL-13) today asked President Obama to reconsider his decision to propose expanded offshore drilling in the Gulf of Mexico.

“Although I agree with your focus on making the country more energy independent, the recent disaster off the Gulf Coast is proof that despite its claims, the oil industry is incapable of preventing catastrophic spills from occurring,” wrote Buchanan in a letter to the President.

“As a congressman representing citizens living along the West Coast of Florida, I have been a strong and consistent opponent of drilling off our shores,” continued the Congressman.

“The recent explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig off the coast of Louisiana clearly demonstrates the risks oil drilling poses to coastal communities,” wrote Buchanan. “Such a catastrophic oil spill that many thought was impossible has jeopardized the environment and the economy of the entire region.”

Buchanan noted that reports indicate that the rig’s underwater shutoff valves (“blowout preventers”), which are supposed to function as failsafe devices, failed to activate upon the explosion of the rig even though they appeared to be undamaged by the blast.

“The 200,000-plus gallons of oil leaking from the damaged rig each day pose an enormous threat not only to the environment and wildlife that inhabit the ocean, marshes, and shores, but also to the businesses that depend on a clean coastline,” added Buchanan. “Floridians are already preparing for oil pollution to reach their shores as businesses in the oyster, bait, fishing, and tourism industries are expecting to suffer significant losses.

“I do not believe that opening more drilling rigs closer to the shore in the Gulf Coast is a wise choice, and I respectfully ask that you reconsider. I look forward to hearing back from you on this critical matter,” the Congressman concluded.

